students and graduates alike. The price, however, may be prohibitive—£12 for 190 pages.

PG JENNER

The Neurophysiology of the Cerebral Cortex By Lynn Bindman and Olof Lippold (pp 411; £47.50) Maidenhead: Edward Arnold, 1981.

This is a most handsome and impressive book, which would be of the greatest help to undergraduate and postgraduate students if they could afford it. It is up to date, well produced and profusely illustrated with helpful diagrams and figures, many of them original. The style is excellent, fresh and critical almost throughout, with no mere repetition of received opinion, and is consequently a joy to read.

The book is divided into sections on structure, electrophysiology, neurochemistry and neurophysiology, the last of these being the longest. There is a 32 page index and there are 1500 references, well up to date and placed together at the end. I found the chapters on the input of information to the cortex, processing in the visual cortex and motor functions of the cortex particularly valuable. The authors are rightly at pains throughout to emphasise the importance of species, preparation, and depth and agent of anaesthesia, in all their critical discussions; and at many points, where the experimental evidence is inconclusive or a piece of evidence is missing, appropriate experiments are suggested. A critical approach like this is necessarily a personal approach, and one is bound to find points at which one disagrees with the conclusions reached. These are, perhaps not surprisingly, often found where the authors' views are well known and controversial. Thus, it is suggested (p73) that the technique of response averaging (whether unit or mass response) "... tend(s) to give response patterns which do not exist at all in reality. ...". Again, the observation that mass brain-potentials can be subject to contamination by muscle action-potentials becomes inflated into the view (p126) that the alpha rhythm is generated by eye muscle tremor and (p138) that the slow waves of sleep are generated by rapid eye movements (which actually occur in a different stage of sleep). These views were presumably originally proposed in order to make people look to their methods and controls; but now they have gained a life of their own, and the critical presentation of evidence from both sides of a controversy, so evident elsewhere in the book, is lacking at these points.

But these are "good" faults; they stem from the enthusiastic partiship of real experimentalists with a point of view, and are easily seen and forgiven. It would have been all too easy to write a less critical, less controversial and less interesting review of current knowledge of the workings of the cerebral cortex, and the authors were right to do it their way.

D. N. RUSHTON


This is one of the best books on the subject that I have read. It opens with an informative section on the development of local anaesthesia which includes a useful four pages of "potted history." Chapters on pharmacology, physiology, applied anatomy and physiology and equipment follow. Regional techniques should never be embarked upon lightly, and precautions and dangers in administration get a good airing. Local analgesic drugs have doses too, and you will not be allowed to forget this! Thereafter techniques are described in detail, each body area being dealt with in turn (it is therefore easy to find one's way about this big volume). Specialised surgical applications of techniques follow and there is a useful (and salutary) section on complications. The last section of the book is concerned specifically with the treatment of pain and is dealt with very comprehensively within a comparatively small compass. The multi-disciplinary approach to pain is emphasised and the "philosophy" of the Pain Clinic outlined. This should be compulsory reading for those thinking of starting this work.

Finally, epidural and intrathecal opiates have a mention. Respiratory depression has been reported after their use. This warning is repeated here: and cryoanalgesia, TCNS, intravenous sympathetic blockade and hypnosis have not been omitted. I was very interested in the technique of coeliac (celiac?) plexus block as outlined, not the loss of resistance test (with air or "local") as satisfactory as feeling the vibration of the peri-aortic structures transmitted to the needle.

Ease of injection is mentioned later in the description. I have the impression that 7-5% phenol in water is as good a neurolytic agent in thoracic sympathetic block as the alcohol recommended, and perhaps a little less likely to produce post-injection neuralgia. And I should like to have seen mention of the relationship between the pain clinic and the hospice and religious affiliations; but this is really "nit picking." I enjoyed the book immensely and recommend it heartily. It is full of good things—a book to be consulted by any doctor who may be concerned with neural blockade and pain work. The editors are to be congratulated. It is well documented with an excellent bibliography. But oh! the price—£52. Librarians should buy it now and doctors put their book tokens together for their own copy.

CDT JAMES


This book gives the contributions to a symposium held in Istanbul, Turkey in September 1979. The communications are grouped into five major areas: demyelinating diseases, convulsive disorders, extrapyramidal diseases, peripheral neuropathies and immunopathology, with a miscellaneous group of articles which include vitamin deficiency, steroids, amines and amines. The emphasis generally is on the underlying biochemistry of the various neurological disorders, with some comments on problems of treatment. The main value of the book would therefore be appreciated by clinicians and research scientists requiring information on possible basic mechanisms associated with these disorders rather than by scientists wishing to be informed on the clinical aspects. This is not surprising as the symposium was organised under the auspices of the...
International Society for Neurochemistry and the main purpose was stated as the exploration of the contributions of neurochemical research to understanding problems in clinical neurology. There is little evidence from the publication of any dialogue between clinicians and scientists—there is no record of discussions which may have taken place after the formal contributions had been given. Nevertheless, within those limitations, the quality of the contributions is high and the book provides a good up-to-date account of current biochemical knowledge and of the contributions neurochemists could make to neurology. The papers were submitted as camera-ready material thus giving the editors little scope for editing. I find the absence of summaries a great disadvantage although the editors have obviously encouraged their authors to end their contributions with comments on future developments and perspectives. The index is only partly useful—it seems to have been compiled from key words supplied by the authors and each item in the index does not refer to the pages on which it appears but to the first page of that article in which it appears. Many interesting aspects are not listed in the index. This is a pity because the wealth of good information available in this compilation is not easily extracted without reading right through each chapter. In current times this is often impossible; the reader may well prefer to use such a source for reference purposes. This type of publication is unfortunately increasing. It is relatively straightforward to gather together a group of eminent, interesting speakers who provide equally interesting manuscripts. It is much more arduous to provide the reader with the standard means of getting full value—good summaries and a thorough index. One wonders when publishers will get the message that such books would prove so much more useful if this were done—perhaps their marketability as well?

ISAAC MARKS

**Examination of the Child with Minor Neurological Dysfunction 2nd edn**

Dr Touwen is concerned about the minimal cerebral dysfunction (maximal neurological confusion) controversy and rightly so. His skill is to describe meticulously the conduct of a good neurological examination of children. His concern is to describe and to grade objective, reproducible but minor neurological signs and few practising paediatric neurologists would disagree with his description except in details. Thus the book is very useful for any doctor training in the skills of paediatric neurology, particularly after reading the expanded discussion in this edition. The lack of normative data relating to his tests weakens the usefulness of the tests though this is defended in the text. The argument that performance is considerably influenced by cultural and social factors to such an extent that local norms are necessary is justifiable though his own findings in his population would have been fascinating. It is doubtful whether his test, which occupies 10 pages of text, is actually used as it stands in daily work, not only because of its length but also because he includes the physical features of such a range of frank neurological disorders. The book describes the examination of the child with neurological disease to a greater extent than might be anticipated from the title. The testing has been used effectively in controlled studies of apparently healthy children (for example with febrile convulsions) but most workers are likely to use a shorter battery.

Where the book is less helpful is in the area of examination which causes the paediatric neurologist and school medical officer most difficulty. He describes this as the "Syndrome consisting of the absence of a syndrome." What of the child whose individual minor signs are inconsistent within the one child, though each is in itself reproducible? What of the child who shows few of his minor signs yet cannot tie his laces or ride a bicycle? What of the child who shows marked minor signs but who functions adequately in everyday tasks? There are children who make neat drawings and atrocious writing, adequate musicians who can't catch a ball, others have a marked articulatory dyspraxia but no other dyspraxic features. Which, if any of these, should be described as clumsy children? There is no answer to such questions at present yet these are the difficult problems for experienced practitioners. Clearly the temperament, past experience and daily management of a child will affect the behavioural profile of that child. Motivation and practice vary so widely that a given minor neurological dysfunction may or may not give rise to practical difficulty. Touwen recognises these problems and this is a strength of his book. This is


Although the new American psychiatric classification (DSM-III) strenuously laboured to omit the term "neurosis," the label will nevertheless outline its obituarists, as witnessed by this book. Neurosis is so vast an area that definite review would be a Herculean task. This modest paperback book is a useful introduction to some aspects of the subject, especially on depressive neurosis, anorexia nervosa and self-regulatory modes of treatment. It gives conventional accounts of the main neuroses and their treatments, drawing on published work until 1979. For post-graduates reading in the area this text is a handy start, though far from being comprehensive. In particular, behavioural psychotherapy is skimpily dealt with. The predominant method of exposure in vivo for the reduction of phobias and compulsive rituals is mentioned only in passing, and the treatment of sexual skills training is not adequately described. Anxiety control training is given rather more space than is warranted by the absence of controlled studies testifying to its value and curious prescriptions are sometimes offered without evidence to back them up; eg that for anorexia nervosa psychotherapy "should be carried out by a psychiatrist or clinical psychologist and should last for at least an hour each week." Inevitably there are errors, as on p20, where it is stated incorrectly that "many patients with animal phobias do in fact have a later age of onset of their neurosis," or on page 99 obsessive-compulsive disorder the less good the prospect of ultimate recovery, a point which does not hold for recovery with exposure in vivo. The book should be made available for all libraries.

HS BACHELARD